

Amazing Grace

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Message from the Headteacher

As another successful term draws to a close, I would like to thank you all for your continued support throughout this year. I am very proud of what our students continue to achieve by their dedication and enthusiasm for their school and the local community.

The superb results in the summer made another positive contribution to the school's reputation ... and the omens for next summer look very good indeed.

The Open Evening back in September was as successful as ever and the school has attracted well over four hundred applications for September 2010. Applications for our sixth form have also shown a marked increase. The continuing popularity of the school will help us weather the "belt-tightening" that is sure to follow the general election next year.

The sixth form provided yet another memorable Christmas Party for the elderly people in Potters Bar which they all thoroughly enjoyed. Many of them commented about the warmth of their welcome to the school and the respect with which they were treated by the young people. We look forward to welcoming them back to the next school production at the end of March 2010.

At the time of writing, I am looking forward to our first evening Christmas Carol Service at Christ Church, Little Heath. I am sure it will be a great success and an excellent way to finish the year.

At the end of this term we say goodbyes to a number of staff: Chris Hopkins has recently retired from teaching after 37 years (!) at Mount Grace. On behalf of the governors, colleagues and students, both past and present we would like to say a big thank you to Chris for his work at the school and to wish him good luck for a long and healthy retirement. We also say goodbyes to Shariefe Dollie, Karen Jones, Sara-Jane Mansfield and Maria Karageorghis - we wish them all the very best of luck in the future and I know they will keep in touch.

It remains for me to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Successful 2010.

Peter Baker
Headteacher



Dates For Your Diary

18.12.09
End of Term

19.12.09 - 3.01.2010
Xmas Holidays

4.1.10
Inset Day - School Closed

5.1.10
Spring Term Begins

11.1.10 - 3.2.10
QCA Public Examinations

12.1.10
Y7 Interim Reports Issued

12.1.10
Y7 Parents Consultation
16.30 - 19.30

19.1.10
Yrs 12/13 Parents Consultation
16.30 - 19.30

29.1.10
Gala Evening
19.00 - 22.00

9.2.10
Yr 11 Parents Consultation
16.30 - 19.30

10-12.2.10
Yr 11 Academic Reviews

12.2.10
Primary Schools Sports Relief Mile Fun Run

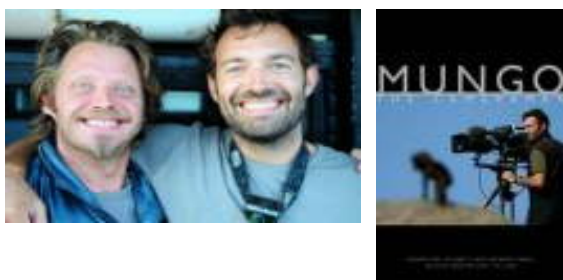
Mungo's Visit to Mount Grace

Paul Mungeam, aka Mungo, spoke about his career as a TV cameraman. His talk was inspirational and showed him to be a real live action hero. As part of his fabulous job, he talked about how he has scaled mountains; travelled the world on undercover investigations, been involved with filming for the National Geographic Society as well as filming many of the master classes on the current "X-Factor." Mungo's exciting career has taken him to over 70 different countries in 15 years; in Mungo's own words he writes:

"Sometimes I feel as though my working life as a cameraman is like a continuous fancy dress party. Every other week brings a new theme – desert, jungle, beach, mountain – each requiring its own specific clothing/costume and specialist equipment for the environment... One minute you can be standing on the summit of Mount Sinai, then in a matter of hours, you are in a taxi through the traffic in Wandsworth, London."

Mungo shared many of his anecdotes from his impressive career and also signed copies of his book, "Mungo The Cameraman". He ended his talk by telling the students a Walt Disney quote – "If you can dream it, you can do it" letting the students know that his dream job came true and so could theirs so never give up on your dreams.

Shirley Bierman (Head of Media Studies)



Fright Night at Thorpe Park

Halloween saw an excited group of Mount Grace students, accompanied by an even more excited group of teachers and police officers on a directed activity to Thorpe Park. This activity, part-funded by Hertsmere Police is an initiative to keep young people away from the risks associated with Halloween, was a great success.

Students were able to enjoy the sights and scenes at Thorpe Park, under the safe supervision of local police officers as well as teachers they know. The behaviour of all students was impeccable and a good time was had by all. However, we were all very tired and had been thoroughly scared when we returned at 11:00! We would like to thank the police officers involved for all their hard work.

Miss. V. Horn

PE

"Could all pupils please make sure that they bring with them a water bottle to every PE lesson !"

Mr D Roberts
PE

Cross Country – November 2009

The PE department would like to say a very big well done to the Mount Grace School Cross Country team. Wednesday was cold, windy and did I mention cold? Students managed to stay positive and run their hardest and everyone put in a tremendous performance.

We have a few individual District Champions:

Gaby Y9 and Daniel Y11

So a very big well done to those above and a 3rd place with George. The Team performance was also very high with the boy's team finishing 1st and the girls finishing in 3rd place. Well done to everyone that took part.

Congratulations must go to all the boys and girls combined teams as out of the 12 schools in our District that competed Mount Grace came 1st in the whole competition. This goes to show that Mount Grace performed as a team and worked together to gain the all overall victory.

Our 6th form BTEC group deserve a huge thanks; as they helped Mount Grace host the event again this year performing, scoring, marshalling and coaching duties. They are a real credit to the school and all worked very hard.

We look forward to next years competition.

Staff Inter-House Netball

On 4th December staff took part in an inter house netball tournament. The competition was a great success with Pegasus coming in 4th Griffin 3rd and in joint first were Dragon and Phoenix. With the tie break it came down to a goal difference and Phoenix came through on top.

A big thank you to all staff that participated in the event and also a special thank you to Meghan, Lauren, Becci, Melissa, Sophie and Chelsie for giving up their free time to help umpire the games and keep the scores.

Student of the month

Congratulations to the following students who were selected for student and volunteer of the month by the P.E department.

September

Student of the month: Matt and Jade
Volunteer: James and Melissa

October

Student of the month: Matthew and Georgina
Volunteer: Chris and Becci

November

Student of the month: Kyle and Christie
Volunteer: Steven and Meghan

November's Challenge Day

Could well have been the best one yet!

Just to remind you, the purpose of our Challenge Days in general is to provide students with the opportunity to learn key elements of the curriculum. Often, a day's focus on such activities is more beneficial than learning in single lessons on a normal timetabled day.

Of course, we try to make the day fun as well as challenging and educational, but most importantly it is an essential part of every student's education.

For instance, every student needs the chance to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. Year 7 students may not have even been aware that they were doing this on their carousel of Multi-Cultural Activities.

Certainly, Aboriginal Dream Painting brought out the spiritual side to students. Research into Africa, New Year Celebrations from different cultures, Ethnic Textiles work making tie-dyed t-shirts, Salsa dancing Cuban-style and multi-cultural cooking all expanded student understanding of cultures beyond their own. So too did learning Russian and watching familiar films but with German or French dialogue.

Year 8 not only got to experience the culture of Street Dance, but also made sure that they were adding to their Healthy Lifestyles with a whole day of moving their bodies to the music. The hall was banging to the sound of more than a hundred pairs of dancing feet.

In contrast, some Year 9 students were scoffing chocolate and having banana-eating contests, but this was all done as part of a day's activities around the theme of Fair Trade. Students learned about their role as global citizens, debating the issues, thinking creatively about solutions to the problems of sustainability and having fun competing against each other in a round-the-school treasure hunt.

Critical thinking was the order of the day for Year 10, but within the context of non-stop Science experiments. There was plenty of setting fire to things, creating complicated methods of bursting balloons, making ice-cream scientifically and creating models of blood cells.

Creativity was also on the menu for Year 11 students, who were given license to express themselves through Beat Poetry. You could say that rapping was good for their creative health and this complemented the physical health provided by the PE department and the workshop in Mental Health organised as part of their PSHE education.

Finally, Year 12 Business students went to Hertfordshire University to compete against other schools in an Enterprise activity, and as expected we were winners in one category and fared very well overall. Meanwhile, other Year 12 and 13 students got into the community and seasonal spirit by working brilliantly together to organise the Old Folk's Christmas Party for the following week.

So, as you can see, Mount Grace students are learning beyond the classroom and rising to the challenge with intelligence, positive attitudes, creativity, teamwork and determination. They should be proud of themselves.

Mr Kenward, Challenge Day Co-ordinator



An Enterprising Challenge for the 6th form Business students

As part of the November Challenge Day experience, a group of students from the 6th form took part in the University of Hertfordshire 'Enterprise Challenge'. The majority of students who were part of the visit were Business students but a number of others came along to make up the numbers.

The day began when students were put into teams and allocated a brief to design a new product in the music, fashion or technology sector. Having designed various aspects of their proposed product, the students then had to present their idea to a panel of 'experts' from industry and the Young Enterprise organisation.

It was fascinating to watch these students, sometimes with a reputation for slow starters, get their heads round a tight deadline and wanting to produce an idea worthy of the competition. After the presentations students were then shortlisted.

Only one Mount Grace Team got into the finals but one of our teams did win a prize of £100 in HMV vouchers for the 'most innovative product' making us very proud tutors indeed. Sadly our finalists were not successful but did acquit themselves against the other schools very well.

It was an excellent event and the University of Hertfordshire were most generous hosts. We look forward to being invited to compete again next year where I am confident that we will do even better.

Mrs J Smith, Business Studies

24th March 2010 Challenge Day

The History and CRS departments are running a trip to St.Alban's Cathedral and Verulamium, with lots of workshops.

Please note school is closed to students on Monday, 4 January 2010.

Term begins on Tuesday, 5 January at 8.40 a.m.

PTFA News

Quiz Evening - Saturday November 7th

In spite of “clashes” with various firework displays we had a good response to the first Quiz Evening of the year. Final results were close - one table were in the lead at the start of the evening - and a lady whom we are too polite to mention by name got very excited but unfortunately some of the later rounds were just too much for her table - still there is always next time!

The proceeds from the raffle will be used for some smaller items - probably shrubs for the Rose Garden and washing up bowls for the Food Technology room.

Body Shop Evening

Thursday November 12th

Andrea visited us again and following some sound advice from her, we delayed the start and the makeover was advertised for a specified time. There were some special offers, good ideas for Christmas presents and a raffle. 15% of proceeds from the sales came to the PTFA - so an enjoyable evening was also profitable for us.

Christmas Fayre Saturday November 21st

Saturday dawned bright but chilly - “The Team” - Barbara, Gail and Mary were thankful it was dry. These three ladies worked very hard to put the Fayre together and after everyone's efforts on the Friday the Hall looked warm and inviting. The non-uniform day had produced some novel items and gifts that could be put to good use as well as money which covered most of our main expenses. Thank you to all those who responded in such a supportive way. Parents, friends and staff provided help just where and when it was needed and in all the years I have been associated with the Fayre it was the quickest “clear up” operation on record. A BIG THANK YOU TO EVERYONE - but especially to the three ladies who took it on at such short notice.

The total as we go to press is in excess of £2,500 - but we may have a few bills still to pay - so watch this space.

Forthcoming Dates:

- Sunday December 5th - Stamp Fair Refreshments
- Monday January 11th - Committee Meeting Library 7pm
- Saturday January 23rd - Family Quiz Evening (See attached form)



Year 12 BTEC National Certificate in Health and Social Care

We are currently doing our BTEC National Certificate in Health and Social Care which is equivalent to two A-levels. We started the course in September, some old and some new who really enjoyed Health and Social Care in year 11 and were ready for a new challenge.

As part of the course one of our units of work requires three placements. Recently we have just gone on our first placement. At the moment we get put into a residential care homes or a nursery but Miss Wells is currently working on trying to get us work placements in hospitals and other departments which we will benefit from.

These are the comments from students that attended there first work experience.

“I took Health and Social Care for a GCSE in year 10-11. I enjoyed it so I thought that I would redo this. When I’m older I also would like to be a Social Worker, so having two A-level in Health and Social Care would help me in this.

On my work placement I went to BUPA which is a Private Residential Care Home. I enjoyed this as I have never worked or been around the elderly with different needs, so BUPA was a good experience for me.”

Shoana

“I went to New Grange residential care home in Cheshunt and I loved it there. I wasn’t expecting to like it as much as I did. I learnt a lot from working with the elderly people, I learnt how much they respect anyone who wants to help them. Working with the elderly isn’t the best job in the world but someone has to do it, and I know that the residents in the care home and the residents relatives respect the fact that the care workers do all that they can for those who need all the help they can possibly get.”

Samantha

“My work experience was in Mayfair Lodge, it was a big step for me! I was surrounded with new people and in a new environment which I wasn’t used to. Everyday throughout the whole week, I was with old residents and to be the only young teenager there made me feel a bit left out and somehow confused. The good thing about my work experience was that I learnt how the age gap can make such huge difference between two or more people because they have reached such high age level that they have mostly lived their lives to the fullest. I realised that I’ve got a long way to go and will be experiencing many things that some I will need to do on my own!”

Josephine

“I was sent to St John’s nursery I was very nervous when I first walked in but the staff and children made me very welcome. I got to know each child and this made my stay at St John’s nursery different to what I thought it would be like, I thought it was really good.”

Stacey

“When working at Coopers Croft in Potters Bar, I found that I have grown a lot as a person and when I first arrived there I had such a wonderful time meeting new people (residents and the workers). I loved working with the residents who lived there and I made lots of different friends. I was so sad when I had to leave because I loved it there so much! I found that it wasn’t like working because every day when I arrived there I had so much fun and I loved listening to all the residents that live there. They all had amazing stories to tell and I loved listening to all of them and finding out how they progressed with their life!”

Maria

“I took Health and Social Care because I was interested in it and took it as a GCSE subject. I was told before that we were going to be sent off to work experience and how it will build our self esteem and add to our CV. This is going to sound cheesy but it would be nice if you take Health and Social Care as an “A” level it’s really fun.”

Zeyney

National Anti Bullying Week “Staying Safe in Cyberspace”

Do you know what your child is doing on the Net?

Many parents admit that they do not understand social networking sites Facebook, MSN, texting, and Myspace etc and as a consequence they have no idea of the nature of conversations their child maybe having on **“Cyberspace”**.

Mount Grace hosted an Interactive Theatre Group and Workshops in liaison with the Community Police on Wednesday 18 November 2009 to focus parents on Cyberbullying and personal safety.

The main focus of the evening was:

- KEEP YOUR CHILD SAFE - Have their password.
- Check what they do ‘ONLINE’
- Ensure their personal safety in the street
- “Immobilise” the mobile phones, i.e. register the phone

Pumpkins and Rockets

To promote personal safety on Halloween and Firework Nights Year 13 drama group wrote and presented two short presentations to all students at Mount Grace and to whole school assemblies in seven local primary schools. They were supported in their scripts by the Community Police and the Fire Brigade. To our knowledge there were no incidents concerning our students on either night.

A great time was had by all!

Important Information

People you may need to know:

Child Protection Officer at Mount Grace School is Mrs B Crawford

The School Counsellor is Mrs B Finch

“Be Safe Be Seen” this winter

The Road Safety Unit has asked that we remind parents and students that when they are travelling to and from schools they should make sure that they can be easily seen, especially at night, on dark days and in bad weather.

It would be helpful to wear something bright especially in dull or misty weather. At night, reflective material is best and shows up in car headlights.

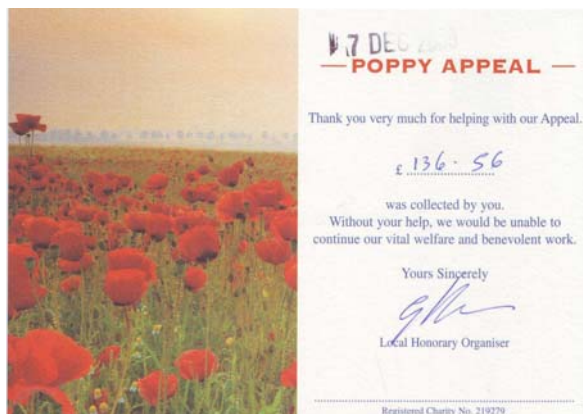
Students cycling to school should check that their bike has a working white front light, a red back light and a red reflector at the back, it is an offence for a student to cycle at night without lights. The students should also wear the appropriate clothing.

Schoolstrader

Why not check out www.schoolstrader.com over Christmas - the website for school communities. Parents, staff, friends and family can use it to buy/sell anything from holiday homes and bikes, to pets and musical instruments. The site is simple and FREE for private ads – very useful during the recession. It has featured in national media including Channel 4 News "Cash Strapped Parents Trade Online", Which, The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph (Top 50 Websites) and on local ITV and BBC radio. You can place ads in just our area, our region or nationally across the network. The site covers all school communities across the UK and Ireland. You can find anything from a trumpet to a trampoline!

Schoolstrader is green – it encourages recycling and reuse of items.

Poppy Appeal



Year 10 Work Experience Parents Evening

Thursday 7th January 2010, 6.30pm

Thank you for your response to our letter in October about the work experience programme for our Year 10 students. We will be holding a parents information evening at Mount Grace on Thursday 7th January 2009 and invite you to attend to find out more about the placement types available and the processes we will be using to organise our work experience programme.

Nancy Hone
Director of Applied Learning

Free computer and internet access from the Government?

Can it be true? Has Christmas come early? Well, unbelievably, the answer is yes if you meet certain criteria:

- Is your child in Years 7 - 9 or
- Are you a Guardian of a looked after student in Years 7-13 and
- Do you qualify for Free School Meals?

If you are in receipt of any benefits, you may be entitled to free school meals (and of course the computer!) The school will help you with the (very simple) application process.

If you are eligible, you could receive a computer package including software, warranty and broadband. To find out more you will need to attend a meeting at Mount Grace School on Monday January 11th 2010. Please register your interest with Mrs S Lee (Head's PA) on 01707 655512 ext 202 by January 8th.



Do you need help planning your future?

All students aged 13-19 can get one-to-one careers information and guidance from our Connexions Personal Advisor, Cath Paget.

If you would like an appointment please write your name and form on a piece of paper and put it in the post box in reception.

For more info about careers education @ Mount Grace see the school Website.



Love2Travel are a new travel agency based in Potters Bar. We specialise in bespoke holidays, long and short haul and luxury holidays to Madeira.

We are proud to be associated with Chickenshed Theatre www.chickenshed.org.uk and for every booking made we will donate £5.00 to them.

In addition to this, for all holidays booked through Mount Grace School Love2travel will donate £5.00 to the School.

All holidays booked and taken over £2,000.00 we will give a complimentary airport lounge pass.

Please visit our website www.love2travel.org you can contact us on Tel 01707 655482 or email michael@love2travel.org

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